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A. C.



N° 29. Friday, March 17.

Assentior Platoni, nihil tam facile in animos teneros atque molles influere quam canendi sonos, quorum dici vix potest quanta sit vis in utramque partem; namque et incitat languentes & languefacit excitatos; et tum remittit animos, tum contrahit; civitatumque hoc multarum in Græcia interfuit, antiquum vocum servare modum; quorum mores lapsi ad molliam, pariter sunt immutati cum cantibus; aut hac dulcedine, corruptelæque depravati.

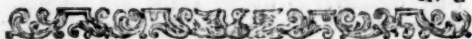
Cicero, lib. 2. de Legibus.



S I am very much obliged to the ingenious Author of the following Letter, so perhaps it will be expected that I should make some Apology to the *Beaumont* for publishing a Discourse, which tends so directly to impugn their most darling Entertainments; but I hope the *Polite* of both Sexes will have the Goodness to consider that it is the indispensable Duty of a Man, of my Age and Character, to correct Vice and Folly of all Kinds, and under all Shapes, without any Regard to Parties or Persons. I sincerely wish that there may be no Weight in any of my Correspondent's
Reasons

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Reasons or Examples; and that we may prove the singular Instance of a Nation, upon whose Morals Luxury, Corruption and unmanly Diversions shall have no Influence. However if any Gentleman of the *Academy* thinks he can refute these Objections, and prove that no bad Consequences ought to be justly apprehended from *such Entertainments* in a *war-like* and *trading* Nation, I shall always be ready to give his Thoughts a Place in my Paper; for as the sole End of this Undertaking is to discover *Truth* and expose *Vice*, so I will never give into that low and contemptible Method of *Controversy*, which has been lately introduc'd, by suffering the World to see only *one Side* of the Question in Debate.

TO CALEB D'ANVERS, Esq;

S I R,

A Discourse on *Operas*, and the gayer Pleasures of the Town may seem to be too trifling for the important Scene of Affairs, in which we are at present engaged; but I must own my Fears, that they will bear too great a Part in the Success of a WAR, to make the Consideration of them foreign to it. A very little Reflection on History will suggest this Observation; that every Nation has made either a great or inconsiderable Figure in the World, as it has fallen into *Luxury* or resisted its Temptations. What People are more distinguish'd than the *Persians* under *Cyrus*, nurs'd up in Virtue, and inur'd to Labours and Toil? Yet (in the short Space of 220 Years [1]) They became so contemptible under *Darius*, as scarce to give Honour to the Conqueror's Sword. The

[1] *Liv. lib. 9. cap. 19.*

Spartans, and the Long-rulers of the World, the *Romans*, speak the same Language; and I wish future History does not furnish more *modern* Examples.

When the Mind is enervated by *Luxury*, the Body soon falls an easy Victim to it; for how is it possible to imagine that a Man can be capable of the great and generous Sentiments, which Virtue inspires, whose Mind is fill'd with the soft Ideas, and wanton Delicacies that Pleasure must infuse? And were it possible to be warm'd with such Notions, could it ever put them in Execution? For Toils and Fatigues would be Difficulties unmountable to a Soul dissolv'd in Ease. Nor are these the imaginary, speculative Ideas of a Closet; but such as have been the Guide and Policies of the wisest States. Of This we have the most remarkable Instance in *Herodotus*. "The *Persians*, after their great and extended Conquests, desired *Cyrus* to give them Leave to remove out of their own barren and mountainous Country into one more blest by the Indulgence of Providence. But that great and wise Prince, resolving the Effect in his Mind, bid them do as they would; telling them, at the same Time, that for the Future they must not expect to command, but obey; for Providence had so order'd it, that an effeminate Race of People were the certain Produce of a delicious Country." What Regard the great Historian had to this Opinion may be easily collected from his reserving it for the Conclusion of this excellent Piece. And the Case is directly the same, whether *Pleasures* are the natural Product of a Country, or adventitious Exoticks. They will have the same Effect, and cause the same extended Ruin. How often have they reveng'd the Captive's Cause, and made the Conqueror's Sword the Instrument of his own undoing? *Capua* destroy'd the bravest Army, which *Italy* ever saw, flush'd with Conquest, and commanded by *Hannibal*. The Moment *Capua* was taken,

taken, that Moment the Walls of *Carthage* trembled. What was it that destroy'd the Republick of *Athens*, but the Conduct of *Pericles*; [2] who by his pernicious Politicks first debauch'd the People's Minds with Shews and Festivals, and all the studied Arts of *Ease* and *Luxury*; that he might, in the mean Time, securely guide the Reins of Empire, and riot in Dominion? He first laid the Foundation of *Philip's* Power; nor had a Man of *Macedon* ever thought of enslaving *Greece*, if *Pericles* had not first made them Slaves to Pleasure. [3] That great Statesman *Tiberius* clearly saw, what was the surest Instrument of arbitrary Power; and therefore refus'd to have *Luxury* redress'd, when Application was made to him in the Senate for that Purpose. Artful Princes have frequently introduced it with that very View. *Davila* tells us, that in an Interview and Semblance of Treaty with the King of *Navar*, *Catharine* of *Medicis* broke the Prince's Power more with the insidious Gayeties of her Court, than many Battles before had done. But there is a single Passage in [4] *Herodotus*, which will supply the Place of more Quotations. "When *Cyrus* had received an Account that the *Lydians* had revolted from him, he told *Cræsus*, with a good deal of Emotion, that he had almost determined to make them all Slaves. *Cræsus* beg'd him to pardon them; but, says he, that they may no more rebel, or be troublesome to you, command them to lay aside their Arms, to wear long Vests and Buskins. Order them to sing and play on the Harp; to drink and debauch; and you'll soon see their Spirits broken, and themselves changed from Men into Women; so that they will no more re-

[2] *Plut. in Pericl. & Demost. Orat.* [3] *Tac. An. lib. 2. cap. 33.* [4] *Herod. lib. 1. cap. 155.*

“bel, or be uneasy to you for the future.” And the Event answer’d the Advice, They are puny Politicians, who attack a People’s Liberty directly. The Means are dangerous, and the Success precarious. Notions of Liberty are interwoven with our very Being ; and the least Suspicion of its being in Danger fires the Soul with a generous Indignation. But He is the Statesman formed for Ruin and Destruction, whose wily Head knows how to disguise the fatal Hook with Baits of Pleasure, which his artful Ambition dispenses with a lavish Hand, and makes himself popular in undoing. Thus are the easy, thoughtless Crowd made the Instruments of their own Slavery ; nor do they know the fatal Mine is laid, till they feel the goodly Pile come tumbling on their Heads. This is the finish’d Politician ; the darling Son of *Tacitus* and *Machiavel*.

But, thanks to Providence, the sacred Monuments of History extend the short contracted Span of human Life, and give us Years in Books. These point out the glorious Landmarks for our Safety ; and bid us be wise in Time, before *Luxury* has made too great a Progress among us. *Operas* and *Masquerades*, with all the politer Elegancies of a wanton Age, are much less to be regarded for their Expence (great as it is) than for the Tendency, which they have to deprave our Manners. *MUSIC* has something so peculiar in it, that it exerts a willing Tyranny over the Mind, and forms the ductil Soul into whatever Shape the Melody directs. Wise Nations have observed its Influence, and have therefore kept it under proper Regulations. The (5) *Spartans*, vigilantly provident for the People’s Safety, took from the famed *Timotheus’s* Harp the additional Strings, as giving his Musick a Degree of Softness inconsistent with their Discipline. The divine

(5) *Cicero, lib. 2. de leg. cap. 39.*

Plato is expressly of Opinion, that the *Musick* of a Country cannot be changed, and the *publick Laws* remain unaffected. Heroes will be Heroes, even in their *Musick*. Soft and wanton are the warbled Songs of (6) *Paris*; but (7) *Achilles* sings the God-like Deeds of Heroes. A noble, manly *Musick* will place *Virtue* in its most beautiful Light, and be the most engaging Incentive to it. A well wrought Story, attended with its prevailing Charms, will transport the Soul out of itself; fire it with glorious Emulation; and lift the Man into an Hero; but the soft *Italian Musick* relaxes and unnerves the Soul, and sinks it into Weakness; so that while we receive their *Musick*, we at the same Time are adopting their *Manners*. The Effects of it will appear in the strongest Light from the Fate of the People of *Sybaris*; a Town in *Italy*, strong and wealthy; blessed with all the Goods of Fortune, and skill'd in all the Arts of *Luxury* and Ease; which they carried to so great an Excess, that their very *Horses* were taught to move and form themselves as the *Musick* directed. Their constant Enemies, the People of *Crotona*, observing This, brought a great Number of Harps and Pipes into the Field, and when the Battle began, the *Musick* play'd; upon which these well-bred *Horses* immediately began to dance; which so disconcerted the whole Army, that 300,000 were kill'd, and the whole People destroyed. Though this Story seems a little *fabulous*, yet it contains, at least, a very good Moral.—What Effect *Italian Musick* might have on our polite Warriors at *Gibraltar*, I can't take upon me to say; but I wish our *Luxury* at home may not influence our *Courage* abroad. O.

(6) *Hor. lib. 1. Od. 15.*

-----Grataq; foeminis,
Imbelli cithara, carmina divides.

(7) *Hom. Iliad. 9. 189.*